

VZCZCXRO3193
OO RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV
DE RUEHLB #0677/01 1341555
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 131555Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1838
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2275
RUEKJCS/SCDEF WASHDC
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2579
RHMFI/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 000677

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA
ALSO FOR A/S SILVERBERG AND PDAS WARLICK
NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/YERGER/GAVITO
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/KUMAR/PHEE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/07/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [MCAP](#) [MARR](#) [EAIR](#) [UNSC](#) [IR](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: WALID JUMBLATT WANTS TO COMPROMISE WITH
HIZBALLAH AND MOVE FORWARD

Classified By: CDA Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) In a May 12 meeting, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt recounted the difficulties of fighting in the Chouf areas the previous evening. The main point Jumblatt impressed upon the Charg was that it is time to accept the recent defeat by Hizballah, make a deal, and move on to the next stage. However, during this transition, Jumblatt cautioned the USG not to take our eyes off of the Special Tribunal or the four Lebanese Generals that are still in prison for their alleged roles in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. End summary.

2. (C) Charg, accompanied by Defense Attach, met with Walid Jumblatt at his Clemenceau Residence in Beirut on May 12. Jumblatt was visibly exhausted and emotionally drained.

LAST NIGHT WAS DIFFICULT
"WE HAD TWENTY CASUALTIES"

3. (C) Describing vicious fighting in the Chouf mountains on May 11, Jumblatt told us that his supporters sustained twenty casualties. Hizballah had opened up with rockets, like the ones it has rained down on Israel in the past, well into the night. When recovering corpses from the battlefield this morning, several of the Druze corpses had been mutilated by Hizballah, according to a Druze priest. Jumblatt instructed the Druze clergy to not publicize this fact and to bury the bodies quietly.

4. (C) Jumblatt said that his fighters had performed well last night, even encircling the Hizballah fighters in Mashara at one point. "We could have massacred them right there," said Jumblatt. "Instead, they let them withdraw to prevent a future cycle of back and forth revenge attacks."

I DON'T WANT TO BE "CLEANSED" FROM THE CHOUF
BUT THE SHIA SAY THEY WANT THEIR LAND BACK

5. (C) "I am avoiding war," said Jumblatt, "because I don't want the Druze to be 'cleansed' from the Chouf. I don't care if I lose my personal prestige in the process." Jumblatt said that he could not fight the armada of Hizballah any longer after last night as all of his people have run out of

ammunition. "We have no supply lines to Syria like we had in 1982," recounted Jumblatt.

¶6. (C) Jumblatt said that Hizballah wants to conduct ethnic cleansing in the Chouf to restore the lands between Jezzine and Kiserwan to the Shia, a state of affairs that was in existed 500 years ago. "You know, they called for this when they came to Jezzine after the July 2006 War," said Jumblatt.

WE NEED TO CONCEDE ON THE TWO CABINET DECISIONS
AND THEN WE NEED TO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT STAGE

¶7. (C) Jumblatt, although tired and yawning, kept returning to a single message throughout our meeting. Specifically, Jumblatt wants the USG to pressure Siniora not to resign and to convince Siniora to accept concessions on the two recent Cabinet decisions regarding airport security chief, Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) BG Wafiq Choucair and Hizballah's telecommunications network. "You must keep him strong," implored Jumblatt. "If Siniora resigns, this is total capitulation to Hizballah." Citing the concomitant constitutional crisis tat would present itself in the event that there as no President and no Parliament, Jumblatt warned that this would create conditions for a complete revisitation of the Taif Accord, and possibly its wholesale renegotiation. Jumblatt assured us that all, except Samir Geagea and PM Siniora, would accept a decision to annul the two cabinet decisions.

¶8. (C) Jumblatt surmises that this round of politics is over,
BEIRUT 00000677 002 OF 002

and the Hizballah-led opposition has won. "I'm a politician. Setbacks happen. We must accept it and move on. They have humiliated us, but what can we do now? We are almost in a state of paralysis as we wait for the U.S. elections."

THE ARAB LEAGUE MUST COME NOW;
ANY DELAY IS BAD FOR US

¶9. (C) In order to move through this impasse, the Arab League delegation should come as soon as possible, insisted Jumblatt. Fearing any delay would give the opposition a pretext to generate additional conditions that would further delay dialogue, Jumblatt told Charg that March 14 should endure this humiliation and "get it done."

¶10. (C) Jumblatt thinks that the most important thing the Arab League delegation can do is to convince all of the March 14 leaders to stay in the government. Many of them, such as Telecommunications Minister Marwan Hamadeh and Social Affairs Minister Nayla Mouawad, were ready to resign along with Siniora. "They (the AL) must convince Siniora to accept tactical defeat on the two decrees."

DON'T TAKE YOUR EYE OFF THE PRIZE
SYRIA STILL IS AFTER THE TRIBUNAL

¶11. (C) Jumblatt said he was not worried about addressing the already agreed-upon agenda points during any national dialogue. However, he is concerned that Qatar's FM Hamad Bin Jassim is involved in the discussion, thus revealing the Syrian hand in any such endeavor. "I will go to the dialogue with Amr Moussa, and I will agree on the previously established agenda items.

¶12. (C) While the previous agenda issues do not pose a problem for Jumblatt, he remains fixated on the International Tribunal for the assassination of Rafiq Hariri. "The Tribunal is the one thing they will try to kill. And they will try to free the four generals who helped kill Hariri." Jumblatt asked Charg to again request, in the strongest terms, that the UNIIIC Judges be removed from Lebanon for their own

safety.

COMMENT

[¶13.](#) (C) Jumblatt was clearly beleaguered today, but he seems firm in his stance, instructing his ministers to vote on annulling the two Cabinet decisions. End comment.

SISON